

COPERNICUS Alliance Conference 2016
15 September 2016 at BOKU, Vienna, Austria

Working towards a robust reference framework to strengthen integration of sustainable development in university teaching

Dr. Anne B. Zimmermann, Dr. Karl Herweg,
Dipl. Ing. Andreas Kläy

Centre for Development and Environment, ESD Cluster
University of Bern, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Doris Wastl-Walter

Vice-Rectorate Quality
University of Bern, Switzerland

Contact: sustainability@cde.unibe.ch

Why is this task important?

1. **MISSION:** make sure that sustainable development is integrated in teaching at universities (as well as in research and operations)
-> *adaption* of the system, not *revolution*
2. **CHALLENGE:** How can fundamentally *independent* faculty staff/institutions be encouraged to integrate sustainable development in their teaching when they are *overburdened* with duties, work in highly *competitive* disciplinary research environments, and face *decreasing security* of funding?

3. **Criteria for assessing progress and increasing recognition would help!**

PURPOSE:

1. **Self-evaluation:** am I on the right track as a teacher?
2. **Support progress in department/faculty:** what steps are needed to integrate sustainable development in our curricula? and what innovative potential do these steps contain for our discipline?
3. **Increase recognition within the university, strengthen university's reputation:** how can the added value of integration be justified within the system?

Our rationale for transformative learning and engaged science

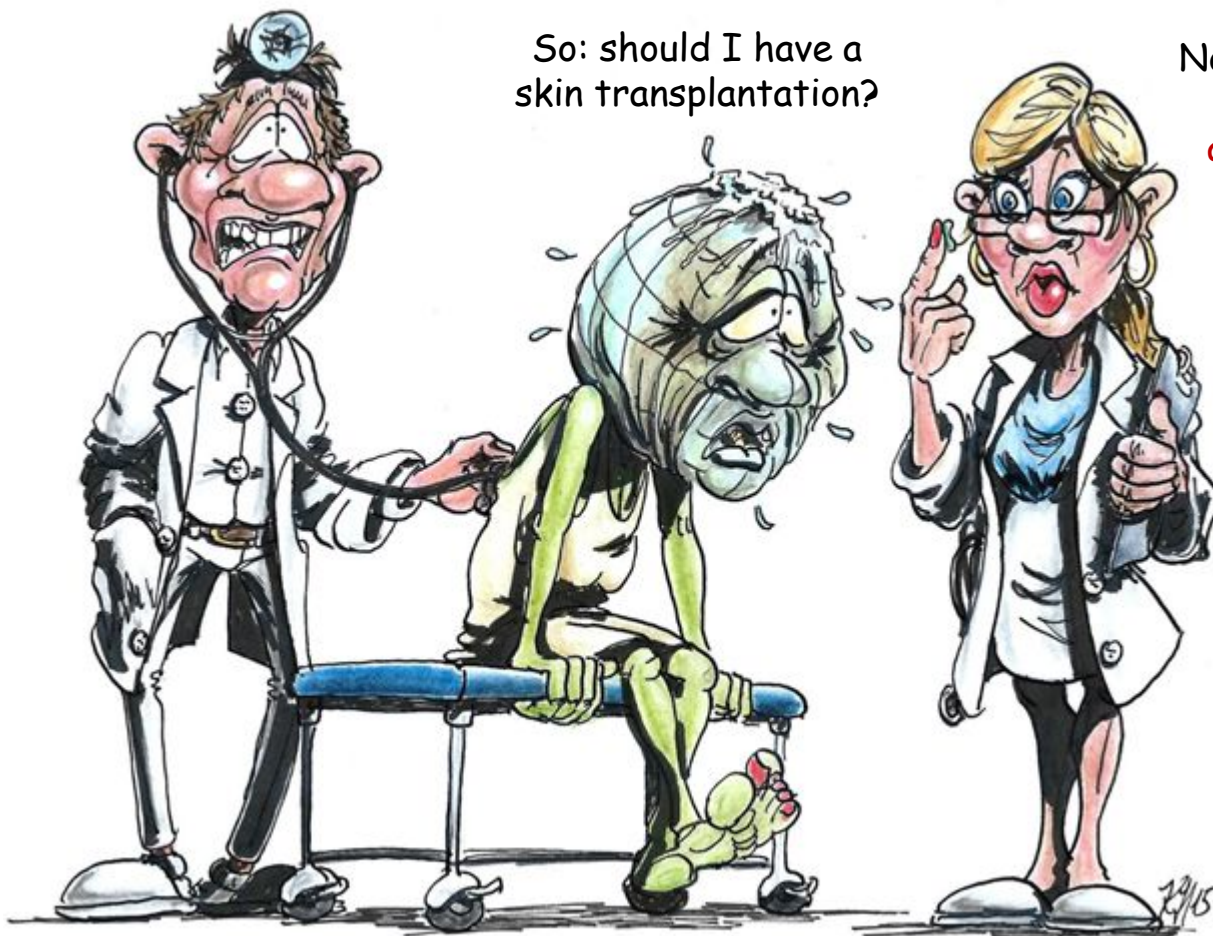
You're suffering from parasites; cosmetics won't be enough to cure you.

So: should I have a skin transplantation?

No... **We need a major transformation... and change agents.**

Universities prepare such change agents...

... but their **current reference frameworks** impede transformation.



Let's get there **step by step** to overcome the challenges

Four degrees of integration (see Sterling and Thomas 2006):

1) denial (*no change*)

2) 'bolt-on' approaches (*education about sustainability*)

3) 'build-in' approaches (*education for sustainability*)

4) and finally curriculum redesign (*sustainable education*)

- Degrees 3 und 4 require a **competence orientation** in teaching, as well as **transformative learning**.
- The dominant science paradigm built on a fact/value dichotomy and a competition model makes it difficult to adopt such an orientation; there's an increasing need for a **new understanding of science and teaching**, and for **institutional change**...
- BUT: we also need to encourage and allow for **progress at all levels!**
All progress is welcome and constitutes a step towards transformation...
- A **sound and robust reference framework** can help

The example of the University of Bern, Switzerland:

Integrating sustainable development into teaching (*mainstreaming*)

- **Sustainable development (SD) in University's strategy** (2014-2021)
 - **Performance mandates for the Faculties and Centres** (since 2013)
 - ***Vision for education:*** no student should leave the University without having heard at least once about SD (but this has been communicated to all only since 2016)
 - ***(Required) implementation:*** at least 2 hours per curriculum should be devoted to SD
 - ***Support:*** 2 projects, using a combined top down and bottom up approach
 - Online [Guidelines and Tools](#) for integrating SD in teaching
 - ESD Competence-Enhancing Support for faculty staff as multipliers

The University's Guidelines and Tools for integrating SD into teaching (*Leitfaden*)



Foundations (*Grundlagen*):

- Sustainable development (SD) according to the United Nations
- Tension between scientific understanding and value orientations in the university setting
- SD in research, education, and operations at the University of Bern
- Education for sustainable development (ESD) at the university level
- Educational content, skills, and appropriate teaching and learning arrangements for ESD

Special Foci (*Vertiefungen*):

1. Concepts, instruments, instructions, tips, and examples
2. Case studies
3. Further assistance (workshops, coaching, ...)
4. Teaching materials (slides, videos,...)

In addition to the Guidelines and Tools...

- 4 Consultation Workshops (2014-2015)
- 1 Early Adopter Workshop (2016)
- 1 High-level workshop with deans
- 7 Coachings on demand: with deans/faculty representatives
- 3 Link Workshops

As of 2017:

- Professional development (1 module for teachers)
- Continuation of coaching and tailored link workshops
- Website with updated tools, interactive options, assessment tools,

What shall do we now?

1. Discuss criteria for self-assessment of early adopters
2. ... for supporting the integration process in institutions
3. ... for a university's monitoring + incentive system



Or do we want to
achieve only one of
the 3 outcomes?

Interactive procedure

- Discuss the purpose(s) of a reference framework (10 mins)
- Decide whether 1 or 3 Outcomes
- Work on the 3 outcomes;
 - step 1:** individual wildcards for each of the Outcomes (10 mins)
 - step 2:** mutual organisation and negotiation of ideas (20 mins)
 - step 3:** further examples (10 mins)
 - step 4:** develop the reference framework together (20 mins)
- Envisage possible future collaboration (5-10 minutes)

OUTCOME 1: Criteria enabling disciplines and approaches to recognize their relation to social-ecological systems and commit to an SD orientation

OUTCOME 2: Criteria for assessing the progress of departments' reflection and implementation processes leading to integration of SD in teaching

OUTCOME 3: Criteria for institutional support of a university's monitoring and evaluation of SD orientation in teaching